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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A 15TH CENTURY PROPHECY CONCERNING THE GREAT WAR

SIR,—While snowbound, a few weeks ago, and the solitary inmate of a country house, I spent most of my hours exploring in my host's library, which contained many remarkable first editions and old manuscripts. There, to my great interest, I came across a small pamphlet, the pages yellow with age, entitled: *The Wonderful Prophecies of Robert Nixon—The Celebrated Cheshire Prophet—From Lady Cowper's Correct Copy.*

I immediately took it to my chair before the fire and did what I suppose every person I know would have done—searched eagerly through the half dozen pages for references to the Great War. To my excitement and astonishment, there were several lines, scattered among the rather jumbled and incoherent verses, which could refer to nothing else.

It seems that our prophet was one Robert Nixon—a village yokel and idiot—who was born in the county of Cheshire, England, in the year 1467. From his infancy he was remarkable for such stupidity and ignorance "that it was with great difficulty his parents could instruct him to drive the team, tend the cattle and such sort of rustic employments." He spoke seldom, but when he did speak, albeit "with so rough a voice it was painful to hear him," it was to utter some remarkable prophecy.

His fame became so great that the King, Henry VII, sent a messenger ordering Nixon to be brought before him, and there in the palace the poor man's last prophecy was fulfilled, so the chronicle relates; for, upon leaving his village, he had sobbed bitterly, declaring that he should be starved to death at Court. To allay his fears he was lodged in the royal kitchen, where he soon became such a pest that the cooks shut him up in a closet in the cellar, where he was speedily forgotten.

As for the Prophecies themselves, the ones which evidently caused the greatest wonder at the time were those relating to local incidents, such as "There shall be a miller named Peter with two heels on one foot," or, "A boy shall be born with three thumbs on one hand"—all of which came true in the immediate neighborhood. He then enlarged his sphere and predicted The Wars of the Roses, The Great Plague, and other English historical events.

It is interesting to note that the last page and a half, which seems to refer directly to the present war, are the ones that appeared exaggerated and impossible of fulfillment to the publisher of the prophecies, who says: "As to any fixed period when these things will come to pass, we cannot learn—being all mentioned with the greatest uncertainty."

The first lines which caught my eye and seemed to me the most remarkable were:

Three years of great wars—
In all countries great uproars,
The first is terrible, the second worse—but the third unbearable.

He goes on to say:

Great wars and pressing of soldiers—
But, at last, clubs and clouted shoes shall carry the day.

Recent events in Russia seem to be the beginning of the fulfillment of this prophecy, as well as of this:

The bear that hath been long tied to a stake shall shake his chains—
That every man shall hear and cause much debate.
A great tax shall be granted but never gathered.

* * * * *
Foreign nations shall invade England, with snow on their helmets,
And shall bring plague, famine and murder in the skirts of their
garments.

Although this has not (and, God willing, will not) come to pass, it certainly describes with great finesse the habits as well as the costumes of a certain enemy, somewhere in France.

A fleet shall come out of the North—
Riding on horses made of trees

This might, with some stretching of the imagination, refer to Zeppelin raids, as well as to anything else, and to the next prophecy we can all bear witness—without the aid of a blue paper, yellow paper, or white paper—as having happened before our very eyes:

In those dreadful days slaughter shall rage to such a degree
That infants left by those that are slain
And damsels shall, with fear and glee,
Cry, "Mother! Mother! Here's a MAN!"

But it is the last lines that bring real hope and cheer as to the outcome of the great struggle, and I give them here, with the fervent prayer that the Kaiser is a faithful and constant reader of THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW!—

With that the LION bears his banner to a hill
Within a forest that's so plain,
Beside a headless cross of stone.
There shall the EAGLE die that day
And the RED LION get renown.
Then rise up George! Son of George!
And bless the happy reign,
Thrice happy he who sees this time,
When England shall know rest and peace again.